

Group I, claims 1-2 and 5-17, drawn to a method of treating cartilaginous diseases with HGF;

Group II, claims 3 and 18, drawn to a method of stimulating proliferation of chondrocytes; and

Group III, claims 4 and 19, drawn to a method of producing proteoglycans.

Applicants respectfully traverse the outstanding Restriction Requirement. Applicants submit that there is no undue burden of search and/or consideration on the part of the Examiner to search and consider claims 1-19 in their entirety. Thus, the Examiner is respectfully requested to withdraw the outstanding Restriction Requirement.

However, to be fully responsive to the outstanding Restriction Requirement Applicants hereby elect Group I, claims 1-2 and 5-17, drawn to a method of treating cartilaginous diseases with Hapeticite Growth Factor (HGF). As indicated above, this is an election with traverse.


If the Examiner has any questions or comments, please contact the undersigned at the offices of Birch, Stewart, Kolasch & Birch, LLP.

Pursuant to the provisions of 37 C.F.R. §§ 1.17 and 1.136(a), the Applicants hereby petition for an extension of five (5) months to April 11, 2003 in which to file a reply to the Office Action. The required fee of \$1,970.00 is enclosed herewith.

If necessary, the Commissioner is hereby authorized in this, concurrent, and future replies, to charge payment or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 02-2448 for any additional fees required under 37 C.F.R. § 1.16 or under 37 C.F.R. § 1.17; particularly, extension of time fees.

Respectfully submitted,

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